CLAIMS

1. A method for detecting early cancer, comprising:

a) measuring midkine, and/or a fragment thereof, in a biological sample, and,

b) comparing the measured level obtained in step a) to a measured level a healthy subject.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the early cancer is gastric cancer.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the gastric cancer is at stage I.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the early cancer is hepatocellular carcinoma.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the hepatocellular carcinoma is at stage I.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the early cancer is lung cancer.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the lung cancer is at stage I.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the biological sample is serum or urine.

9. A use of an antibody recognizing midkine, and/or a fragment thereof, for early cancer detection.

10. A diagnostic agent for early cancer comprising an antibody that recognizes midkine, and/or a fragment thereof.

11. A kit for detecting early cancer in a biological sample, wherein

the kit (a) comprises a container that holds an antibody that specifically binds to at least one epitope of midkine, and/or a fragment thereof, and (b) determines the presence of midkine, and/or a fragment thereof in the biological sample.

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12. The kit according to claim 11, wherein the antibody is adsorbed onto a solid.

13. A method for assessing cancer prognosis, comprising:

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     a) measuring midkine, and/or a fragment thereof, in a biological sample, and,
     b) correlating the measured level obtained from step a) to cancer prognosis.

15 14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the cancer is gastric cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma, or lung cancer.

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